



Welcome to START!

VIRGINIA START is a systems-linkage approach to supports for individuals with an intellectual disability and/or developmental disability, and a mental health condition or challenging behavior that is negatively affecting their quality of life.

The underlying philosophy of START is that services will be most effective when everyone involved in supports and treatment is allowed to participate actively in collaborative treatment planning and service decisions.

START emphasizes the prevention of crises before they occur. This is done through early identification of individuals, development of crisis response plans, training, and technical assistance.

START offers clinical assessment and support by using the following methods:

- Training and empowerment for families and caregivers;
- Effective positive behavior support approaches;
- Therapeutic tools developed in collaboration with medical, allied health, intellectual disability and mental health professionals;
- Community and home based crisis intervention and stabilization supports;
- A six bed residential therapeutic and planned respite facility; and
- Optimal utilization of existing resources through system linkages.

Who is eligible for Virginia START? Individuals age 18 and older with an intellectual disability and/or a developmental disability and a co-occurring behavioral health need or challenging behavior that is affecting their quality of life.

Who should be referred to Virginia START? Reasons for referral may vary. Some examples of reasons for referral include: individuals at risk of losing their home or job due to behavioral concerns, have a history of complex medical, behavioral, and/or trauma related issues, have exhibited a significant deterioration in functioning over the past 24 months, have been hospitalized or admitted to a psychiatric hospital or training center, or have exhibited behavior that resulted in contact with law enforcement or jail.

Who can make a referral to Virginia START? Referrals may be made by individuals and families, current support and medical providers, CSB Support Coordinators/Case Managers/Clinicians, or other natural supports in a person's life.

How do I make a referral to Virginia START? See contact information in your region.

When will Virginia START be ready to take referrals? The five START teams across Virginia are in different stages of development.



Contact Information for Regional START Programs

Region I- Easter Seals UCP

START Director-Kelly Watson

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HPR I ID Crisis Services Project Manager: Gail Paysour

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Region II- Easter Seals UCP

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Region III-New River Valley Community Services

START Director-Denise Hall, LCSW

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Region IV-Richmond Behavioral Health Authority

START Director-Ron Lucas

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Region V- Hampton-Newport News

Community Services Board

START Director-Dona M. Sterling-Perdue, MSW

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Virginia Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services

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